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LB 408

Wehrbein,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Wehrbein,...

SENATOR SCHROCK: ...I have outlined some cuts that the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Game and Parks, Department of Environmental Quality, have all taken cuts. Where's the fairness in here, where Department of Roads and the Highway Trust Funds takes nothing? I know roads are important. But Game and Parks is important. It's our number-one tourist attraction. They have a lot facilities. Where's the equity here? I'm not...I probably won't support Senator Thompson's amendment, because I think it goes too far. But what's wrong with a little money? What's wrong with a little help? I like to be a team player. These people aren't team players. What's going on here?

SENATOR CUDABACK: Would you yield, Senator?

SENATOR SCHROCK: Can you explain that, why it's totally off limits, and why they can't help out a little bit?

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Well, I don't have probably the best answer in the world for you. Life isn't fair, Senator Schrock. But I...we have had very modest increases in the last...if you'll look at your sheet, except for a jump in '95-96, the increase has been very, very modest over the last year. That...in other words, the roads program has not grown like some other departments have had to. They, in the process, if you...there's another handout that show they've dropped 160 employees, I believe it is, since...in the last few years. They've worked hard at being efficient. But by and large, with construction costs, they're much like the medical costs, they're above the inflationary costs. So those costs have gone up, so we're not getting as many miles for our buck. But I believe it's...in the end, it's a political decision. Nebraskans want and expect good roads. And I think most of us are reacting to that.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Well, if you have your two hands out, and they're scales, and one is higher education and one is Department of Roads, which one do you hold up, Senator Wehrbein?